Meeting of State Environment Ministers

*252. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether two days Meeting of State Environment Ministers held in September, 2004 opposed or rejected the proposed reforms in the procedure for granting environmental clearance to development projects;

(b) if so, the details of States, suggestions that Government should form an independent monitoring and evaluation agency to assess compliance of the spirit of Environment Protection Act, 1986;

(c) if so, how many State Government demanded delegation of powers to them on the projects of national importance;

(d) if so, what were the main decisions taken; and

(e) how many suggestions have been accpted and implemented?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) In the conference of the State Environment Ministers held at New Delhi in September 2004, the State Government had by and large supported the need for reforms in environmental clearance process but with the delegation of greater powers to the State Governments for granting environmental clearances.

(b) None of the State Governments had requested for the formation of an independent monitoring and evaluation agency to assess the compliance of the spirit of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. However, the Government of West Bengal had underlined the need for establishing an autonomous body in very State to be called the Environment Protection Agency for dealing with all matters pertaining to the grant of environment clearances to the projects.

(c) None of the State had demanded delegation of powers to them for granting environment clearances in respect of projects of national importance.

(d) The Conference had resolved that the Ministry of Environment and Forests should hold futher consultations with all the States before finalizing the reforms.

(e) The revised environmental clearance procedure has not been finalised.